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Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which covers the period from January to December 2015, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 2106 (2013), in which the Council requested me to report annually on the implementation of resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), and to recommend strategic actions. Developments during the reporting period have deepened concerns about the use of sexual violence by terrorist and violent extremist groups, including as part of the systems of punishment and reward through which they consolidate their power. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Council recognized the changing global context of peace and security, in particular the gender dimensions of violent extremism and mass displacement. The Council's recognition of sexual violence as both a tactic of war and a tactic of terrorism (resolution 2242 (2015)) affirms that conflict-resolution and counter-terrorism strategies can no longer be decoupled from efforts to protect and empower women and girls and to combat conflict-related sexual violence.

2. The term "conflict-related sexual violence" refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked (temporally, geographically or causally) to a conflict. This link with conflict may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator (often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group), the profile of the victim (who is frequently a member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority), the climate of impunity (which is generally associated with State collapse), cross-border consequences (such as displacement or trafficking in persons) and/or violations of the terms of a ceasefire agreement.

3. While many settings are affected by the threat, occurrence or legacy of conflict-related sexual violence, the present report is focused on 19 country situations for which credible information is available. For the first time, United Nations country presences were requested to report on the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism (see sect. III). The report should be read in conjunction with my seven previous reports on conflict-related sexual violence, which provide a

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cumulative basis for the listing of 48 parties (see annex). As in 2014, the majority of listed parties are non-State actors. Engaging with such groups to foster compliance with Security Council resolutions raises unprecedented political and operational challenges. All States repeatedly listed for grave violations against children and/or conflict-related sexual violence will be prohibited from participating in United Nations peace operations. Troop and police contributors that are currently listed for such violations are required to engage with my special representatives in order to be delisted and to implement specific time-bound commitments and action plans to address violations for which they are listed (see resolution 2242 (2015) and S/2015/682).

4. The report is based on cases documented by the United Nations. The increased presence in the field of women's protection advisers, who are responsible for convening the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence and facilitating dialogue in order to obtain protection commitments from parties to conflict, has deepened the quality of the data and analysis aimed at informing interventions. To date, 34 women's protection advisers have been deployed to seven mission settings. All six peacekeeping missions with a mandate that includes the protection of civilians have established the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements and incorporated the matrix of early-warning indicators of conflict-related sexual violence into their broader protection arrangements. A concerted effort to enhance prevention, early warning and timely responses to conflict-related sexual violence will continue to require dedicated human and financial resources commensurate with the scale of this challenge.

5. Strengthening the capacity of national institutions is critical to ensuring accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, in accordance with its mandate under Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), has provided assistance to Governments, including in the areas of criminal investigation and prosecution, military justice, legislative reform, protection of victims and witnesses and reparations for survivors. Reporting directly to my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts is composed of experts from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a specialist seconded by the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Team also maintains a roster of experts with a range of specializations. Since its establishment, the Team has played a catalytic role in implementing the frameworks of cooperation agreed upon between my Special Representative and national authorities and regional actors, complementing the work of the United Nations country presence. With dedicated assistance, Governments can effectively adjudicate such crimes, as in the case of Guinea, where the technical assistance of the Team has resulted in 16 indictments of military and political leaders for sexual violence and other crimes committed in September 2009. The Team, by virtue of its structure and composition, has contributed to enhanced coherence on the issue of conflict-related sexual violence among the entities constituting it. To date, the Team has been engaged in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan.

6. The United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative, which consists of 13 United Nations entities and is chaired by my Special

Representative, supports the development of training, guidance and advocacy resources aimed at building the technical capacity of United Nations country presences to deliver a coordinated and holistic response to conflict-related sexual violence. In 2015, it provided catalytic funding for the deployment of women's protection advisers to Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported a mapping of interventions to implement the national strategy to combat gender-based violence in Côte d'Ivoire and funded a joint project in Bosnia and Herzegovina supporting transitional justice. A number of tools and knowledge products were produced to improve practice in the field, including guidance on strengthening the medico-legal response to sexual violence in conflict, developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO); a guidance note on the intersections between the Gender-based Violence Information Management System and the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements, prepared by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and a menu of country-level support options. Joint technical support missions were conducted to Mali in January and South Sudan in April. In 2015, through the joint roster of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Justice Rapid Response of international investigators of crimes involving sexual and gender-based violence, some 30 experts were deployed to accountability mechanisms, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, the fact-finding missions to Iraq and Libya, and the national war crimes processes. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in collaboration with a range of partners, developed a new conflict-related sexual violence training module for core and advanced-level predeployment training, in addition to advanced-level integrated mission training for military, police and civilian components.

II. Sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security: overview of current and emerging concerns

7. A consistent concern is that fear and cultural stigma converge to prevent the vast majority of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence from coming forward to report such violence. Practitioners in the field estimate that for each rape reported in connection with a conflict, 10 to 20 cases go undocumented. The figures presented here reflect incident reports and therefore do not indicatee the magnitude of the problem. My successive reports on conflict-related sexual violence provide a cumulative picture of the factors that can either enable or constrain the ability of survivors to seek redress. In addition to the debilitating physical and psychological trauma, most victims fear being stigmatized or subjected to reprisals by the perpetrators. This is compounded by a lack of confidence in national institutions, including the police and judiciary, especially when sexual violence is perpetrated by the very forces meant to provide protection.

8. Accordingly, a critical objective is to bring information to light and improve the opportunities for survivors to safely seek recourse. Any attempt to suppress such information by intimidating victims, witnesses or their families in order to convince them to recant complaints, or by denying access to relevant sites, is a further violation that warrants Security Council scrutiny. Such intimidation often extends to

service providers and can thus have a chilling effect on their response. Late reporting can be lethal. For example, in the Central African Republic, only 26 per cent of survivors seek assistance within 72 hours, missing a critical opportunity to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission or unwanted pregnancy and to gather forensic evidence. Amidst emergencies, vast population movements, capacity constraints, suspended legal systems and overburdened, underfunded or inaccessible services complicate documentation. The denial of access to places that may cause acute vulnerability, such as detention settings, is another impediment. The threat or use of sexual violence as a form of ill treatment in detention and interrogation centres remains a largely unquantified problem, although extensive testimonial evidence, including from Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, points to its prevalence. Such violence is often used as a form of torture against men and boys, many of whom remain silent for fear of social ostracism due to accusations of homosexuality in contexts in which it is taboo or even criminalized, as it remains in 78 countries. An important, albeit counter-intuitive, consideration in interpreting information on conflict-related sexual violence is that an increase in the number of survivors coming forward to report such violence, including to State-run facilities, generally signifies an easing of access restrictions, the availability of high-quality care and an improvement in the security situation overall.

9. Experience from the field attests that, when appropriate mechanisms are in place, such as the gender-based violence crisis hotline in Somalia operated by a non-governmental organization, or the sustainable community-based care available in remote regions of the Central African Republic, reporting increases significantly. When there are specialists available and confidential avenues for reporting, the issue becomes visible and can be addressed, rather than the attendant trauma, disease and desire for vengeance being left to fester within communities. When multisectoral services are available, survivors may be more willing to pursue justice, as seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where 66 per cent of rape survivors who received integrated medical, psychosocial and legal support opted to file a case. The only country covered herein for which detailed data are provided on sexual violence against men and boys is the Central African Republic, where a conscious effort has been made to describe gender-based violence services in gender-neutral terms and to train both male and female staff with a view to minimizing the perception that they support women exclusively. A total of 62 countries still provide no legal protection for male rape victims. Free medical treatment is also crucial for a survivor-centred response. However, in many settings, survivors are charged fees by the police to open a case file, as in Somalia, or asked to pay for medical certificates, as in the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, health providers often require survivors to report to the police before receiving care. In Myanmar, this has meant that only 4 per cent of gender-based violence survivors choose to access services. The practice of mandatory reporting to the police also presents a barrier to access to care in contexts such as the Sudan and South Sudan, despite formal instructions to the contrary, as well as in the Syrian Arab Republic and some countries receiving Syrian refugees.

10. It is alarming that incidents of mass rape continue to occur with impunity despite the issue having been a priority concern on the agenda of the Security Council for almost a decade. In 2015, such cases were documented in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Sudan, and widespread and systematic sexual violence continued in the Syrian Arab Republic and areas of Iraq

held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition, reports of targeted sexual assaults based on actual or perceived political affiliation emerged in Burundi. When suspects implicated in such incidents are released from custody, or are redeployed in proximity to civilian centres, it signals to communities that reporting is not only dangerous, but also futile. Rapists anticipate that their victims will not have the means, courage or support required to testify against them, especially in the chaos of conflict. Prosecution is therefore essential to prevention, because it can deter potential perpetrators and contribute to restoring faith in the rule of law. It demonstrates that no political or military leader is above the law and no woman or child is beneath it. However, given the absence, obstruction or protracted pace of justice in many conflict-affected settings, communities commonly resort to traditional mechanisms. In South Sudan, it is estimated that 90 per cent of such cases are resolved through customary courts, which often require rape victims to marry the perpetrator as a form of settlement. In north-east Nigeria and in Somalia, "restitution" through marriage is widely accepted by victims' families in order to avoid "shame", and in Myanmar, "reparation marriages" are a traditional remedy for rape. Such measures not only fail to provide deterrence, but also deny the victim a future, effectively sentencing her to repeated rape.

11. Patterns of sexual violence also persist as a manifestation of a lack of discipline and lax command and control. An encouraging development has been the adoption of commitments, action plans and disciplinary measures by parties to armed conflict, such as the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), as well as progress on implementing zero-tolerance policies and codes of conduct for the armed forces in Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire and Nepal. Efforts to obtain protection commitments have also been undertaken with non-State actors, such as the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejercito del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). This is the first time, in the latter case, that a specific plan to combat sexual violence has been adopted by a non-State armed group. To change behaviour, such efforts must become more systematic. A glaring disparity remains between international human rights standards and national legislation in conflict-affected countries, which often minimizes these crimes or conflates them with adultery, as in Afghanistan and Yemen. This shields the perpetrator at the expense of the victim. Transitional justice can provide an opportunity for transforming harmful social norms and ensuring that wartime atrocities do not become entrenched in the post-conflict period. This process begins with gender-responsive mediation aimed at ensuring that concerns regarding conflict-related sexual violence are reflected in ceasefire agreements, peace accords and subsequent implementation mechanisms. Effectively addressing the issue of conflict-related sexual violence in peace agreements can potentially increase the durability of peace by mitigating security fears and improving transparency, accountability and confidence among the parties. However, of all the unfolding peace processes referenced herein, the Colombian process alone has addressed gender concerns in a systematic manner that exemplifies the aims of the Security Council in resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and subsequent resolutions. This can ensure that conflict-related sexual violence is not omitted by history, but rather reflected in the public record, validating the experiences of survivors and promoting reconciliation.

12. In response to the age-old culture of denial and impunity that has characterized this scourge, in 2015 the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution declaring 19 June the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (resolution 69/293). The aim of the resolution, which was sponsored by 114 countries, is to commemorate the breakthrough adoption on 19 June 2008 of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council condemned sexual violence as a tactic of war and an impediment to peacebuilding. The commemoration provides a new opportunity to raise awareness, stand in solidarity with the survivors and pay tribute to those working on the front lines.

13. Women and girls face a heightened risk of sexual assault when performing livelihood activities such as collecting firewood, grass or water, going to markets or tending fields, as in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Nigeria, South Sudan and the Sudan (Darfur), or when herding cattle, as in remote areas of Myanmar. In the Central African Republic, rape has been used to punish Christian women for trading with members of the Muslim community and to "dishonour" them so that they dare not set foot in Muslim enclaves. Given that there is already a pronounced gender gap in terms of women's access to land and other productive assets, this reduces their resilience to security shocks, including in terms of financial and food security. The ever-present threat of sexual assault compels women to lead highly circumscribed lives in militarized zones, as seen in eastern Afghanistan or northern Sri Lanka. Moreover, high-profile women across a range of professions have been subjected to sexual harassment and humiliation aimed at silencing them. In this way, sexual violence serves as a tool of social and moral control to relegate women to the private sphere and to punish perceived "countercultural" behaviour. Professional women in Libya have been exposed to inflammatory rhetoric, and Afghan women serving in, or training to join, the security sector have suffered sexual harassment. In Burundi, women associated with the political opposition have been depicted in media cartoons as prostitutes. This carries echoes of the media incitement to violence against women during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, as well as of the incitement to ethnically motivated rape by Radio Bentiu FM during the resurgence of conflict in South Sudan in April 2014. In 2015, reports emerged of ISIL using radio broadcasts to threaten and terrorize women. Historically, misogynistic media propaganda and crackdowns on women's rights and freedoms have presaged the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, terrorism and political repression. This underscores the strategic value of gender analysis in all atrocity-prevention efforts.

14. In some contexts, sexual violence is employed as a tool of genocide against indigenous, religious, ethnic or political minorities. Extremists groups such as ISIL have raped women pursuant to a plan of self-perpetuation aimed at transmitting their ideology to a new generation who can be raised in their own image. In this way, women's bodies are used as "biological weapons" to alter the demography of a region and to unravel existing kinship ties. In addition, individuals have been targeted for physical and sexual violence on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. The risks facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex minorities has been a blind spot in the monitoring of civilian protection concerns. This issue was featured for the first time in my previous report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2015/203). In the intervening year, it has become apparent that enhanced attention, including through the Council's Arria formula meeting on the

persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex minorities in the Middle East, held on 24 August 2015, is leading to heightened awareness.

15. When security deteriorates, women and girls often find their mobility greatly restricted. They currently face grave threats when passing checkpoints in Myanmar, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen; using public transportation, which may be operated by ex-combatants, as in parts of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali; and at every stage of the displacement cycle, including in the camps or urban settlements in which they seek refuge. During the reporting period, a mass migration crisis occurred, which included conflict-related sexual violence as a deliberate form of persecution to displace populations in the Horn of Africa, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. As a result, more than 950,000 new refugees and migrants reached Europe. Reports have emerged of people-smugglers demanding sex as "payment of passage" and of an evolving criminal infrastructure designed to exploit refugees, in particular unaccompanied minors, including for trafficking, commercial sex and sexual slavery. Given these cross-border dynamics, it is critical that effective regional and subregional cooperation be undertaken to close corridors for trafficking in persons.

16. In countries in which women are denied the right to confer their nationality upon their children, contrary to article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, there is a considerable risk that such children will be left unregistered and stateless, which will result in their socioeconomic marginalization and vulnerability to future radicalization. This includes children born as a result of rape, who continue to live in the shadows. Although there are many children born as a result of rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda, they are rarely accepted by society and often viewed as both a "bad memory" and a future threat. Social pressures combined with a lack of reproductive health care make unsafe abortion a leading cause of maternal mortality in many displacement settings, from the Central African Republic to South Sudan.

17. Increased debt and dependency on humanitarian assistance have led many displaced families to rely on harmful coping strategies, such as the early marriage of girls. The rate of underage marriage among Syrian refugee girls hosted in neighbouring Jordan, Lebanon or Turkey has more than doubled since the beginning of the crisis (from 12 to 26 per cent) owing to fears of sexual violence, lack of access to education and economic hardship. Abduction for the purposes of sexual slavery or forced marriage to combatants also appears to be on the rise. Armed groups often view the civilian population as a resource to be exploited, seeing women's sexuality and fertility as commodities to be "owned", trafficked and traded as part of the political economy of war. This is evident in the cross-border trafficking of Syrian and Iraqi women and children. Crucially, in December 2015, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on trafficking in persons (S/PRST/2015/25), in which the Council affirmed the nexus between such trafficking and sexual violence and underscored the urgency of efforts to deter, detect and disrupt trafficking in persons, including by ISIL, Boko Haram and other violent extremist groups.

18. Serious and continuing allegations and underreporting of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers and non-United Nations forces represent another area of major concern. Sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers

violates the very trust placed in them by host populations and the expectation that such peacekeepers will fulfil their mandate to protect civilians. Global attention has been paid to the sexual abuse of minors in the Central African Republic by peacekeeping forces and sexual exploitation and abuse allegations in Somalia and elsewhere (see A/70/729). Sexual exploitation and abuse, among other crimes and forms of serious misconduct, by military, civilian and police personnel is unacceptable, and the United Nations system will continue to strengthen efforts to implement the policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation. Regular reporting to the Secretary-General by United Nations mechanisms, including those related to children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, and OHCHR will continue to include allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (see resolution 2272 (2016).

III. Sexual violence committed in the context of violent extremism, including as a tactic of terrorism

19. The shocking trend of sexual violence employed as a tactic of terrorism by violent extremist groups was documented in my previous report, in which I built a case for making women's protection and empowerment central to counter-terrorism strategies, which have traditionally been gender-blind. It demonstrated that the targeting of women and girls that accompanies the rise of extremism is not incidental, but premeditated, systematic and strategic. While the threat of sexual violence has been a "push" factor driving the forced displacement of civilians, the offer of wives and sex slaves has been a strategic "pull" factor for the recruitment of men and boys, inducing both local young people and foreign fighters to join the ranks of ISIL. ISIL has also used medical professionals to procure drugs and administer harmful treatments not justified by medical concerns, including hormone treatments to accelerate the physical maturation of young girls in order to expedite their sale and sexual exploitation, and drugging them to facilitate rape, thus making some physicians complicit in medicalized torture.

20. Following the advocacy of my Special Representative, there have been a number of efforts during the reporting period to mainstream such considerations into policy processes. In October, the Security Council expressed deep concern, in its resolution 2242 (2015), that acts of sexual violence were part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, which were used to increase their power, revenue and recruitment base and to shred the social fabric of targeted communities. The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) includes a focus on gender equality and the need to empower women as a force for sustainable peace. By its resolution 2253 (2015), the Council expanded the sanctions framework for the suppression of terrorist financing to formally include ISIL and condemned the abduction of women and children for sexual exploitation, trafficking and trading and to force the payment of ransoms. In January alone, ISIL extorted $850,000 for the release of 200 abducted Yezidis, and in 2014, ransom payments to ISIL from the Yezidi community amounted to between $35 million and $45 million (see S/2016/92). Such evidence notwithstanding, the global discourse on and response to the issue of curbing financial flows to violent extremists are focused almost exclusively on such considerations as the sale of oil and antiquities. The fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in June

2016, will provide an opportunity to anchor new understandings in an expansive global framework.

21. Despite such policy developments, conflict-related sexual violence committed by violent extremist and terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Ansar Eddine, the Taliban and Al-Qaida continues unabated. ISIL describes the capture and enslavement of "infidel" women and children as an inevitable consequence of its conquest of new territory and seeks to regulate and codify sexual slavery, as expressed in its fatwa No. 64, of 29 January 2015. This continues the explicit justification of sexual enslavement presented in its pamphlet of December 2014 entitled "Questions and answers on taking captives and slaves", and in volume 9 of its magazine, *Dabiq*, of May 2015. The ideological opposition of ISIL affiliates to the autonomy and education of women and girls has placed adolescent girls, primarily, at heightened risk of abduction for the purposes of sexual slavery and forced marriage. This has been particularly pronounced in north-east Nigeria, where Boko Haram continues its campaign of abduction, forced marriage and forced pregnancy. Attacks by violent extremist and terrorist groups disproportionately affect women and girls, who are often targeted as the repositories of cultural identity, the relatives of perceived fighters or the bearers of future generations who will populate disputed territories.

22. It is critical, therefore, to deepen the understanding of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and to formally recognize victims of sexual violence as victims of terrorism in order to build counter-narratives and counter-strategies and pave the way for reparations and redress. It is also critical to invest in the capacity of women's groups to lead grass-roots efforts to counter extremism and youth radicalization. Engagement with traditional and religious leaders, who can help to shift the shame and stigma of sexual violence from the victims to the perpetrators, is vital to ensuring that extremists do not win the underlying battle of ideas. This includes negating attempts to legitimize rape on religious terms. Efforts to counter violent extremism must not compromise women's rights, but rather empower women as part of efforts to foster resilient families and communities, as called for by the Security Council in resolution 2178 (2014) on addressing the terrorist threat.

IV. Sexual violence in conflict-affected settings

Afghanistan

23. The fall of Kunduz city, in northern Afghanistan, which was attacked by Taliban forces on 28 September and remained partially under their control until 13 October, caused widespread chaos and fear. The Taliban conducted house searches using a list of human rights defenders, including women's rights defenders, journalists and the staff of non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and the Government. Those searches, combined with active fighting in the city, reports of the abduction of women and allegations of sexual violence, caused the mass displacement of civilians and the suspension of some essential services for women, including shelters and health care in several adjacent provinces. Despite the severe access and security constraints impeding documentation, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) considers the allegations of an abduction of a woman and the killing of two women to be credible. The emergence of ISIL affiliates in eastern Afghanistan also caused some families to either flee or

confine women and girls to their homes. Multiple sources have expressed concerns about sexual violence, and continued monitoring and investigation are required.

24. Rising insecurity and the fear of repercussions exacerbate the underreporting of sexual violence by impeding access to services, especially in areas controlled by anti-Government elements. Under the law, there remains a conflation of rape with adultery, which means that the complainant herself may face a criminal charge. National institutions are ill-equipped to respond to cases of sexual violence, and women represent less than 2 per cent of the Afghan national police. UNAMA documented 55 incidents of sexual violence against women and girls, 7 of which were committed by parties to the conflict, including the police, anti-Government elements, members of a pro-Government group and the Taliban. Between March 2014 and March 2015, national institutions recorded 169 cases of rape, although the Government's report does not mention a link with conflict in any of the cases. The United Nations remains concerned about boys recruited by armed groups in Afghanistan, who may be at risk of sexual abuse, and by ongoing reports of the practice of *bachah-bazi*, involving "dancing boys", which may include sexual violence and the enslavement of boys by men in positions of power. In June, the Government launched its first national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

Recommendation

25. I urge the authorities to ensure the safety of service providers, human rights defenders and monitors and to address the lack of accessible services for women and girls. I call upon the Government and all parties to the conflict to make the protection and empowerment of women central considerations in any peace process; to counter messages of intimidation by ISIL affiliates, the Taliban and other groups; and to ensure that sexual violence is clearly defined and criminalized in the Penal Code. I also urge that legislation prohibiting the practice of *bachah-bazi* be swiftly adopted.

Central African Republic

26. Concerns regarding conflict-related sexual violence became particularly acute in late 2015, given the political unrest. During that period, many women and girls were in need of assistance, and many service providers were forced to suspend their operations. Intercommunal conflict, poverty, displacement and a climate of impunity reinforced gender inequality and placed women and girls at heightened risk. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) verified 79 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, 36 involving the rape of minors, committed by former Séléka, anti-balaka and Lord's Resistance Army elements; armed youth and self-defence groups; and gendarmes and the police. Service providers recorded 29,801 cases of gender-based violence more broadly, including rape, sexual assault and sexual slavery. Of the survivors, 27,977 were women and girls and 1,824 were men and boys. A total of 44 per cent of cases involved gang rapes, often committed in front of family members. Rape has been used to punish women suspected of trading with people on the other side of the sectarian divide. The pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, launched in 2015, revealed that a number of children associated with armed groups had been subjected to sexual violence. There was also a disturbing pattern of

sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeepers, with the MINUSCA Conduct and Discipline Team addressing 23 cases.

27. The absence of a functioning justice system, combined with the fear of retaliation and the pressure placed on survivors and their families by the perpetrators, continue to deter reporting. Evidence has emerged of forced marriage as a negative coping mechanism to "protect the victims' honour". Those who report to service providers often come forward very late, sometimes a year or more after the incident. Survivors experience rejection by their families and communities, in particular when they are pregnant. Children born as a result of rape are rarely accepted by society, and a high number of rape victims resort to unsafe abortion, which is the leading cause of maternal mortality. Many public structures charge fees for medical services and certificates, which renders them inaccessible to the indigent. Sexual violence against men and boys has been shrouded in cultural taboos. Accordingly, a neutral term for gender-based violence crisis centres has been adopted, namely listening centres, and male staff have been employed. In 2015, 1,128 boys and 969 men accessed gender-based violence services.

28. Reports emerged of married women being abducted from their homes and forced to marry former Séléka fighters, and allegations arose of women and girls being used as sex slaves by anti-balaka elements. Conflict-related sexual violence is both a cause and a consequence of displacement, and most incidents are reported during flight. For example, women sought refuge in host families and sites for internally displaced persons following a series of rapes in connection with armed attacks in villages along the Mbrès and Ouandago axis. More than 447,000 people have been internally displaced, and sex has been demanded from women fleeing war zones as a form of "payment of passage". Sexual assaults are so frequent when internally displaced persons leave displacement sites that United Nations agencies have begun distributing warning kits to women, which contain flashlights and whistles to alert local protection committees in the case of emergency. The law establishing a special criminal court with jurisdiction over grave human rights violations was promulgated in June 2015. Efforts are under way, including by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence remains central to the court's undertakings. Following the signing in January 2015 of a presidential decree establishing a rapid response unit within the police and the gendarmerie to combat sexual violence, the Team, in coordination with MINUSCA, was deployed to provide technical advice to the Government to make it operational. The Team also supported the training of military prosecutors through the regional training centre of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Although the justice system is largely non-functional, on 18 September an anti-balaka fighter was sentenced to five years imprisonment for rape. Parties to the conflict participated in the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, held in May, at which women's organizations called for action to end impunity for sexual violence.

Recommendation

29. I encourage the authorities to operationalize the joint rapid response unit to combat sexual violence and to establish the special criminal court to exercise jurisdiction over grave violations of international law.

Colombia

30. Peace talks between the Government and FARC-EP made welcome progress in 2015, and a breakthrough agreement was reached on 15 December on truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition for victims of the conflict. The agreement provides for a comprehensive transitional justice process, which includes a truth commission that recognizes the disproportionate impact of conflict and conflict-related sexual violence on women, and a special jurisdiction for peace, which identifies sexual violence as a grave crime for which amnesty cannot be granted. Following the creation of the unique structure of a gender subcommission in September 2014, leaders of women's rights and sexual diversity groups, as well as survivors of sexual violence, participated in the talks. The United Nations supported national and regional forums to ensure that the voices of more than 3,000 civilians were included in the process. My Special Representative visited Colombia in February and Havana in March, and called upon the parties to place gender justice and the eradication of conflict-related sexual violence at the centre of the peace process. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict has supported the Government's legislative reform efforts and the development of guidelines for the military and the police.

31. In January 2015, the Constitutional Court issued an order in which it emphasized the persistence of conflict-related sexual violence and urged the authorities to address the structural factors that perpetuated such crimes. Although the judicial authorities have committed themselves to according priority to such cases, few charges have thus far resulted in convictions. Significantly, in February, sentences for conflict-related sexual violence were issued against "Cuco" Vanoy, "La Mona" and five other former paramilitary members.

32. The gaps in data due to underreporting notwithstanding, conflict-related sexual violence is considered to be a widespread risk in at least 10 departments of Colombia, predominantly areas under the influence of armed groups. In addition, incidents and threats of sexual violence have been reported against women leaders and activists and those associated with armed groups. Cases of forced prostitution, sexual slavery and trafficking in persons were documented. Those at risk include indigenous groups, Colombians of African descent, girls residing in remote areas and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Service providers reported 1,973 cases of gender-based violence in 2015, and the perpetrators included post-demobilization and other armed groups and, in some cases, members of the Colombian armed forces. The National Victims' Unit registered 103 cases of conflict-related sexual violence between January and December 2015, with armed groups identified as responsible for 46 per cent of such cases. Men were recorded as victims in 3 per cent of cases, and women of African descent or indigenous women were targeted in 30 per cent of cases. The Unit awarded reparations to 5,488 sexual violence survivors. However, despite such exemplary commitment, a gap remains between the robust normative framework and the institutional capacity for its implementation, including for psychosocial assistance and services for survivors in remote areas.

Recommendation

33. I commend the parties on the progress made in the peace process and urge them to continue to ensure that gender and conflict-related sexual violence

considerations remain central to the implementation of the agreement. At this critical juncture, it is essential to ensure adequate capacity for a continued monitoring of violations, including conflict-related sexual violence, which can undermine peace and reconciliation. I welcome the Government's willingness to work with my Special Representative and her Team of Experts and to share good practices with other conflict-affected countries.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

34. During the reporting period, data collected by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UNFPA and UNHCR each show a decline in incidents of conflict-related sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the United Nations remains cautious as to the interpretation and completeness of those data, which are likely to be affected by underreporting and limited access. MONUSCO verified 637 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, of which 375 victims were women and 262 were girls. The majority of perpetrators were from armed groups, which were responsible for 74 per cent of the cases, compared with 69 per cent in 2014. Government security forces were responsible for the remaining 26 per cent of confirmed incidents. The FARDC was the main perpetrator on the side of the Government and was responsible for cases involving 133 victims. The national police was implicated in cases concerning 28 victims. UNFPA recorded 1,900 cases of conflict-related sexual violence by armed perpetrators in North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema provinces, as well as the former provinces of Orientale and Katanga. UNHCR data identified South Kivu as the province most affected in 2015, followed by North Kivu and the former province of Orientale, which were most affected in 2014. According to UNHCR, more than one third of victims are internally displaced persons, refugees or returnees. In March 2015 alone, five attacks in which women were raped took place against internally displaced persons sites.

35. Although there are signs of progress, conflict-related sexual violence remains prevalent, with a reported incident of mass rape by national forces. A unit of FARDC soldiers was also allegedly involved in the rape of at least 12 women during a cordon-and-search operation in the Kalehe territory of South Kivu, conducted between 20 and 22 September 2015. The Government has launched an investigation. On the side of the armed groups, Raia Mutomboki factions, predominantly based in the Shabunda area of South Kivu, are responsible for 16 incidents recorded by MONUSCO and have targeted their attacks against civilians in villages and mining sites, including in an incident of mass rape during the night of 1 to 2 May 2015. The Forces de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI), in Ituri province, were responsible for 22 per cent of cases verified by MONUSCO. Failed negotiations between the Government and FRPI led to the disintegration of the group into fragmented units, which attacked and terrorized villages in southern Irumu territory. Another group, Mai Mai Simba Manu, repeatedly raided mining sites and villages in Mambassa territory in Ituri province and Lubero territory in North Kivu. These attacks were accompanied by high levels of sexual violence, with 17 women raped in a single attack. Elements of the Forces démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) were responsible for 9 per cent of all conflict-related sexual violence incidents. Despite a de-escalation of the Batwa-Baluba conflict in the former province of Katanga, UNHCR registered 171 victims of sexual assault, perpetrated primarily by Batwa militiamen.

36. Sexual violence against children remains distressingly high, accounting for 41 per cent of all cases, a figure that stood at 48 per cent in 2014. A United Nations report on girls associated with armed groups between 2009 and 2015 described incidents of forced marriage and sexual slavery committed by the Allied Democratic Forces, noting that approximately one third of those girls had been subjected to sexual violence. A pattern of extreme violence against children in Kavumu, South Kivu, involving kidnapping and rape, has been exacerbated by impunity.

37. The Government continued to work closely with my Special Representative. In December 2015, the President delivered a national address in which he pledged zero tolerance for sexual violence, and his personal representative on sexual violence launched a campaign to improve victims' access to justice and services. In March 2015, FARDC inaugurated a commission to oversee its action plan against sexual violence. In 50 conflict-related sexual violence trials, 109 members of the security forces were convicted and sentenced to prison terms of between 1 and 20 years. The United Nations continues to provide holistic support for survivors by embedding legal clinics and psychosocial services in medical facilities. Military justice authorities and the special police for the protection of women and children also continue to combat sexual violence in a challenging context. MONUSCO and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict assisted the FARDC in the implementation of its action plan, resulting in the issuance of command orders prohibiting sexual violence and the signing by 30 commanders of documents aimed at addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

38. Many of the perpetrators of the Walikale mass rape involving 387 victims, and for which the Security Council urged swift prosecution in 2010, remain active in the conflict today. Likewise, the alleged perpetrators of the mass rapes in Bushani and Kalambahiro in 2010 and 2011 have yet to be brought to justice. Judgments, including the award of reparations to victims of sexual violence issued by Congolese courts and for which the Government is liable, remain unpaid. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict is assisting in the development of a prosecutorial strategy for the backlog of emblematic sexual violence incidents and the establishment of mechanisms for the protection of victims and witnesses. The Team of Experts also continued to provide support during mobile court sessions by embedding experts in the MONUSCO Prosecution Support Cells in Goma.

Recommendation

39. I urge the Government to sustain its efforts to combat impunity by bringing perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence to justice, including at senior levels, and by ensuring full implementation of the armed forces action plan. I further recommend that the authorities ensure the prompt delivery of services and reparations to victims, including the execution of outstanding compensation awards.

Iraq

40. First-hand accounts of sexual violence continue to be received from displaced persons who have fled areas controlled by ISIL, as well as those rescued from captivity. Secondary accounts, which have been received by family and community members who are in contact with Iraqi women and girls remaining in ISIL captivity in Mosul, Tall'Afar and Raqqah, corroborate the use of sexual violence. On

26 April, the ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi issued a "fatwa" in which he ordered the separation of Yezidi children from their mothers. Children as young as 2 years of age were transferred to the Madrassa Jihadia, and those over 10 years of age were sent to the Jihadia Institute in Tall'Afar. The women were then transferred within Iraq and to the Syrian Arab Republic and presented to so-called "emirs" for sexual exploitation. This advanced the strategy adopted by ISIL of separating families in order to more easily control the population and address the shortage of women at the disposal of their fighters in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. ISIL has incorporated sexual violence into its systems of punishment and reward: during Ramadan, it ran a competition on memorizing the Koran, with the winners being promised Yezidi sex slaves as a prize. There are also concerns that sexual violence has been used by the Mahdi Army and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, in the governorates of Salah al-Din, Diyala, Basrah and Baghdad, during 2014 and 2015. The Office of my Special Representative received testimony from survivors and other primary sources of rape, sexual harassment and sexual torture, in addition to restrictions imposed on women's rights and freedoms. The incidents mainly took place following abductions from public streets, during house searches and in ad hoc detention facilities, and included the torture of men and boys.

41. In displacement settings, threats of sexual violence persist, including sexual exploitation and child marriage. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable: most are out of school and many have been forced into early marriage. Humanitarian actors have struggled to reach areas with the highest concentrations of internally displaced persons, such as the Anbar, Ninawa, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates, owing to access constraints. Sexual and reproductive health services, trauma counselling and reintegration support are severely limited. There is a shortage of staff trained in the clinical management of rape and a dire need for safe houses and shelters for abused or at-risk women, with only three such shelters in the Kurdistan region and none in south or central Iraq. The Government has expressed its willingness to address conflict-related sexual violence and facilitated the visit of my Special Representative to the country in April 2015. However, specific areas of intervention and cooperation have not yet been agreed upon.

Recommendation

42. I call upon the authorities to adopt measures to tackle conflict-related sexual violence, as discussed during the visit of my Special Representative, including programmes to support the social reintegration of women and girls released from ISIL captivity; safe houses, shelters and community-based medical and psychosocial care; and engagement with religious and civil society leaders to curb extremism. Efforts to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system through the deployment of women's protection advisers should be accelerated.

Libya

43. Continued armed confrontations across Libya and the expansion of terrorist groups have exacerbated the plight of civilians, in particular in Benghazi, Darnah and Sirte. Violent extremist groups, such as ISIL and Ansar al-Sharia, are consolidating their positions, with reports of forced marriage to their fighters and the imposition of draconian regulations on women. Groups pledging allegiance to ISIL have, in some cases, subjected forcibly recruited boys to sexual violence (see A/HRC/31/47).

44. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, in particular foreign women, face a heightened risk of conflict-related sexual violence. Two gang rapes of migrant women were recorded in November, purportedly by armed groups and the police. Migrants interviewed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) also reported witnessing women awaiting departure to Europe being taken away at night for the presumed purpose of sexual abuse by smugglers in "connection houses" in western Libya.

45. All parties continued to commit violations that potentially fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. OHCHR documented the case of a woman who was abducted in Tripoli and repeatedly raped by the leader of an armed group for more than six months. She reported witnessing six girls who were also raped by members of the group during that time. When she eventually managed to escape, she was pregnant and underwent an abortion in a third country. Sexual violence has also been reported in the context of official and unofficial detention and as committed by the police, armed groups and criminal organizations. Women, men and children are not held separately in detention and, in some cases, women have been subjected to strip and cavity searches by male guards. A female medical professional reported to UNSMIL that an armed man receiving treatment sexually assaulted her on 18 May in the hospital where she worked. The survivor noted that a number of similar incidents perpetrated by armed men against female staff were going unreported owing to the climate of impunity. The limited participation of women in the political dialogue remains an impediment to reaching a lasting, inclusive peace. There is still no functioning transitional justice mechanism, and the Libyan Foundation for Victims of Sexual Violence, established in 2014, is not yet operational.

Recommendation

46. I call upon the authorities to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence crimes are duly investigated, the perpetrators brought to justice and services and reparations provided to victims, in line with Decree No. 119 (2014). I also call upon the Constitution Drafting Assembly to ensure that gender equality principles are reflected in the new Constitution. I urge all parties to provide monitors with unhindered access to places of detention.

Mali

47. The inter-Malian dialogue concluded on 20 June 2015 with the signing of an agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali by the Government, the Plateforme and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA), which precludes amnesty for sexual violence. However, volatility in the north, combined with sociocultural inhibitions and fear of reprisals, continues to restrict reporting of sexual violence. Survivors often resist filing legal complaints or seeking care owing to a lack of confidence in the institutional response and instances of pressure placed on victims and their families not to pursue justice.

48. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) reported 25 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, gang rape and attempted rape against 9 girls and 16 women. A total of 6 of the cases were allegedly perpetrated by elements of the Malian defence and security forces, 14 by elements of the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés

(GATIA), 1 by a member of Ganda Izo, 2 by members of the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad and the others by unidentified armed elements. The incidents occurred in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao, and most of the victims were members of the Tuareg community. Service providers recorded 89 cases of conflict-related sexual violence involving 80 women, 8 girls and 1 man. A total of 7 of these cases were allegedly committed by the Malian defence and security forces, 39 by members of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), 38 by armed men whose affiliation could not be established and 5 by MINUSMA peacekeepers. Those cases allegedly committed by MINUSMA peacekeepers were referred to the Conduct and Discipline Team.

49. Patterns of conflict-related sexual violence were observed during the occupation of Ménaka, in the Gao region, and Anéfis, in the Kidal region, by GATIA elements. In Ménaka, sexual violence was deliberately directed against the wives and daughters of CMA members. Similarly, in Anéfis, reports of conflict-related sexual violence against local women coincided with the military occupation by GATIA, which is a party to the peace agreement. In Timbuktu, local sources indicate an increase in sexual violence since the installation of the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad in July 2015, including the rape in September of a woman and girl at gunpoint while travelling on public transport, allegedly by elements of the Coalition.

50. Members of the Malian defence and security forces hierarchy continue to obstruct investigations, including by redeploying alleged perpetrators to theatres of conflict. Legal proceedings have progressed in relation to 19 of the 80 cases allegedly committed by violent extremist groups in 2012, and a protection trust fund has been established to support sexual violence survivors during these investigations. A total of 23 cases of sexual violence, also dating back to 2012, were filed in Bamako on 6 March 2015 against 15 suspects. One of the suspects, Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, is currently on trial at the International Criminal Court. Malian women's groups have objected to the exclusion of sexual violence charges from his indictment, which was focused only on the destruction of cultural property. In August 2015, the Mauritanian authorities released Sidi Mohamed Ould Mohamed Ould Bouamama, despite his indictment for alleged atrocities, including conflict-related sexual violence, in 2012. In September 2015, political leaders of the Plateforme issued a statement of commitment to further engage their military and political wings in efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence and to work with MINUSMA towards an action plan. During its deployment to Mali in June 2015, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict engaged with the judicial authorities on addressing the backlog of conflict-related sexual violence cases, and with the bar association of Bamako on the provision of free legal aid.

Recommendation

51. I call for women to be fully and meaningfully represented and gender expertise to be embedded in the monitoring and implementation committees of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and urge the Government to adopt a law for the protection of victims and witnesses.

Myanmar

52. The process of political reform in Myanmar presents an opportunity for advancing women's rights and combating conflict-related sexual violence. The inclusion of sexual violence in the nationwide ceasefire agreement, signed by the Government and eight ethnic groups on 15 October 2015, is a promising sign. In particular, the stipulation that armed forces and groups must not commit any form of sexual violence and that women must be represented in political dialogue provides a foundation for addressing sexual and gender-based violence. However, there continue to be serious concerns about impunity for conflict-related sexual violence. Military justice lacks transparency, despite the Defence Services Act (1959), which provides for the transfer of cases of rape by military personnel to civilian courts. Moreover, State health practitioners continue to request a police report before authorizing the provision of medical care to rape survivors, contributing to a rise in unsafe abortions and maternal mortality. This practice persists despite the requirement under the Emergency Treatment of Patients Law (2014) that service providers ensure access to life-saving medical care.

53. Sexual violence has been exacerbated by conflict and displacement, notably in Kachin and northern Shan States, linked to the collapse of social protection mechanisms, the increased presence of armed actors, and military camps in proximity to civilian centres. Fear of reporting, which is generally due to shame and cultural narratives that define women's issues as "unspoken" issues, is greater when crimes are committed by members of armed groups, given the risk of retaliation. When traditional mechanisms are used, "reparation marriages" of the victim to the perpetrator may be ordered, which deters reporting. A rise in trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced marriage was noted, with 45 cases recorded early in 2015. Stateless women and those who lacked identity documents were at greatest risk, including while travelling on crowded boats and staying in smugglers' camps. In 2015, six alleged rapes by members of the armed forces were reported, though the actual number is believed to be much higher. The gender-based violence subcluster provided services to over 600 women and girls in 2015 in both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of Kachin and Rakhine States. Approximately 20 cases of sexual violence are recorded per month. On average, just 2 per cent of survivors choose to pursue legal redress, and just 4 per cent opt to access health services, in line with the perceived requirement that victims must first report to the police.

Recommendation

54. I encourage the Government to adopt a comprehensive law to address violence against women and to uniformly enforce the Defence Services Act (1959) so that military perpetrators can be prosecuted transparently.

Somalia

55. Conflict-related sexual violence remains widespread throughout Somalia and affects displaced women and girls in particular, who comprised 74 per cent of the victims recorded in 2015 and 81 per cent in 2014. It serves as a tool to punish and assert dominance in the context of inter-clan conflicts, military offensives, displacement and forced evictions, with women from minority clans exposed to the greatest risk. In areas held by Al-Shabaab, a range of violations continue, including

a practice called "dumaashhi", which involves the claiming of new brides by fighters (see S/2015/801). Between January and June 2015, service providers recorded 2,901 cases of rape and 1,007 cases of gang rape. During the same period, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) documented 14 cases of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls, noting that a lack of outreach and response avenues had exacerbated underreporting. This became evident given the rise in reporting that occurred following the establishment of a hotline sponsored by a non-governmental organization, which received 73 sexual violence cases in October alone. The majority of these were attributed to the Somali National Army, with most taking place in the Bakool or Shabelle Hoose regions. Arrests were made in 56 cases, although it is unclear whether they have led to prosecution. The judicial process is complicated by local power dynamics, the politicization of cases and victims being required to pay fees to the police.

56. Services are severely limited, with a weak legislative framework and insufficient access to justice perpetuating a climate of impunity. Efforts undertaken during the reporting period included outreach to 9,315 women and girls for psychosocial support, legal assistance and medical care provided by UNICEF and its partners. UNSOM and UNDP are helping the Somali police to establish specialized units to address violence against women and children. With support from UNFPA, police, prosecutors, judges, legal aid providers, and civil society organizations were trained on the multisectoral response to sexual violence. UNSOM is supporting the delivery of conflict-related sexual violence scenario-specific training of trainers to the Somali national army, targeting recently recruited and integrated forces. A protocol for the clinical management of rape has been developed, and a forensic facility is being established to improve evidence for prosecution. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict assisted in strengthening the provisions of the draft bill on sexual offences, which is pending adoption, and helped to build the capacity of Somali military prosecutors.

Recommendation

57. I encourage the Government to adopt the pending bill on sexual offences and implement the commitments made in its national action plan to combat sexual violence in conflict, of 2013, including training and accountability measures for the army and police.

South Sudan

58. The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was signed in August 2015, yet the situation remains volatile. Sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic of war with a brutality that points to its ethnic, as well as political, undertones. In addition to recurrent intercommunal fighting, new armed groups have emerged, such as those of General Martin Konji and Major General Johnson Olony, as well as youth militias. Militarization, arms proliferation and the rule of law vacuum, have triggered an escalation of violence. Sexual violence has been employed in a widespread and systematic manner by all parties in the course of military offensives and counter-offensives. The majority of incidents recorded were committed in Unity State by SPLA and associated militias.

59. UNMISS documented 194 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence by parties to the conflict, involving at least 280 victims. Service providers documented 266 cases of rape: 96 per cent of the victims were female, and 25 per cent were children. Among the alleged perpetrators, 4 per cent were members of the national police, and 17 per cent were affiliated with armed groups. One of the most egregious incidents of conflict-related sexual violence took place in July 2015 in Unity State, where offensives launched by SPLA in Koch County included the rape and gang rape of at least 30 women and girls, some of whom were later burned alive in their tukuls. One survivor stated, "If you look them in the face when they are doing it, they will kill you". A witness in Leer County reported that assaulting women and girls was considered a form of "practice" for soldiers. UNMISS recorded the case of a woman who was gang raped by four SPLA soldiers. Thereafter, she witnessed other women subjected to the same ordeal as a form of reprisal when SPLM/A-IO reclaimed the village. Following attacks by SPLA and affiliates, boys were reportedly found sexually mutilated. Between May and June 2015, SPLA soldiers, often intoxicated, committed sexual assaults and "assigned" women to fighters. An older displaced woman was repeatedly assaulted by SPLA soldiers who entered her home in search of food and money. Abducted women and girls have also been forced to carry loot, as well as cook, brew alcohol and transport wounded soldiers. In Juba in February 2015, a displaced Nuer woman reported being forced to "marry" an SPLA soldier. This followed the murder of her husband and 10 other Nuer soldiers by members of SPLA, who then forced their widows into sexual slavery. In September 2015 in Central Equatoria State, SPLA soldiers reportedly raped several pupils returning home from school and held a mother in sexual slavery in their barracks. In November, in Eastern Equatoria State, two girls and an older woman were reportedly gang raped by SPLA soldiers.

60. Women and children were subjected to sexual violence when entering and leaving sites for the protection of civilians, notably in Bentiu and Malakal. On 14 May, 11 displaced women were reportedly abducted by SPLA soldiers in Bentiu. In Leer, a mother of four was gang raped by five soldiers on the roadside in front of her children, following which two other soldiers dragged her into the bush and raped her. This incident spread fear among female internally displaced persons, causing them to restrict their movements, impeding critical livelihood activities. As a consequence, some have resorted to exchanging sex with male internally displaced persons to obtain basic supplies. UNMISS has taken measures to mitigate these threats by patrolling high-risk zones and facilitating the supply of firewood and fuel. In the protection of civilian sites themselves, rape and attempted rape have been reported, and there are concerns about unsafe, self-administered abortions, with fetuses being found in latrines. Nationwide, the capacity for the clinical management of rape remains low, with greater efforts needed to extend medical, legal and psychosocial support to survivors. The weakness of the justice system contributes to a reliance on traditional mechanisms, which generally do not treat rape as a crime and under which forced marriage is routinely prescribed as a "remedy".

61. My Special Representative continues to engage with the leaders of both parties, namely the President, Salva Kiir, and the SPLM/A-IO leader, Riek Machar. In line with the joint communiqué signed by the Government in October 2014, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, in coordination with UNMISS, assisted in the drafting of an implementation plan. The

Government has since established a joint technical working group to oversee implementation. On 26 May 2015, the Minister of Defence and Veterans' Affairs issued a ministerial order to prohibit the use of sexual violence by SPLA. In coordination with UNMISS, the Team of Experts provided support to SPLM/A-IO in the development of an implementation plan for the communiqué issued by Riek Machar in December 2014. The focus of this plan is on accountability and the protection of victims, witnesses and service providers. Pursuant to this, in October 2015, 53 SPLM/A-IO commanders, including Lieutenant General John Buth Teny, commander of the Pagak operational base, as well as four major generals, six brigadier generals and nine colonels, signed undertakings that reinforced their individual and command responsibility for preventing and punishing conflict-related sexual violence. SPLM/A-IO will also establish a special investigation and documentation unit to enhance accountability.

Recommendation

62. I urge both parties to accelerate the implementation of the commitments made under their respective communiqués on conflict-related sexual violence, and I call for the operationalization of special protection units on sexual and gender-based violence in the police.

Sudan (Darfur)

63. Conflict-related sexual violence remains of grave concern in Darfur, where patterns of ethnically motivated sexual violence as a means of punishment, persecution and forced displacement have been noted for 12 years. It has also been more than a decade since the Security Council referred the situation to the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including systematic rape. The threat and terror of sexual violence, which is linked with the prevailing insecurity and lawlessness, looms large over everyday life, restricting women's mobility. A total of 53 per cent of recorded sexual assaults occur when victims venture to isolated areas to farm or collect firewood.

64. In 2015, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) documented 80 cases of conflict-related sexual violence involving 105 victims, who ranged from 5 to 45 years of age, with minors constituting 53 per cent. All were female, with the exception of one male victim, and 47 per cent were internally displaced persons. One victim was killed following the rape, and many others sustained grave physical injuries, with 32 per cent of the cases being gang rapes. UNAMID acknowledges that the available data do not reflect the actual magnitude of violations, owing to stigma, fear of reprisals, the limited presence of law enforcement and a denial of access to places of alleged violence. In Central Darfur, allegations of mass rape following attacks by the Rapid Support Forces on Golo in January 2015 have been raised with the Government, but little progress has been made in gaining access to the area in order to corroborate the accounts. Moreover, allegations of the mass rape of an estimated 200 women and girls over a period of 36 hours beginning on 30 October 2014 by the Sudanese armed forces in Tabit, North Darfur, have still not been impartially investigated or appropriately addressed.

65. Some 40 per cent of conflict-related sexual violence cases centred around North Darfur, where attacks against civilians continued despite the enhanced

security measures introduced by the newly appointed wali (governor) in June. A 15-year-old girl and a 27-year-old woman were raped by assailants identified as armed Arab men in uniform during an attack on their village by the Sudanese military on 19 and 20 January. The highest number of documented incidents occurred in January, coinciding with military operations by the Government in and around west Jebel Marra. A significant number of cases corresponded to the onset of the migratory season for armed Arab herdsmen and the farming season for displaced and local civilians. A total of 80 per cent of the perpetrators of sexual violence were described as being armed men. On 16 September, a 14-year-old displaced girl was raped in front of her mother and uncle by an armed man while farming in Southern Darfur. In another flagrant case, on 13 May, armed men raped a bride and her sister on their way to the wedding, in the company of relatives and neighbours. A total of 15 per cent of cases were attributed to members of the national security apparatus, including the Sudanese armed forces, while men in civilian attire, both armed and unarmed, were identified as the perpetrator in 23 per cent of cases. In the remaining instances, perpetrators were either unidentified or a civilian known to the victim. Some victims indicated that their attackers were associated with proxy forces supported by the Government, or were armed men in military uniform. The identification of such men is complicated, however, by the fact that military uniforms can be purchased at local markets. UNAMID and the United Nations country team have enhanced their interaction with communities and have tailored patrolling schedules to the livelihood activities of women and girls. UNICEF continued to support family and child protection units in Darfur, and UNFPA distributed rape kits through the Ministry of Health.

66. In 2015, 45 cases involving 69 victims were reported to law enforcement officials, with investigations undertaken in only 19 of the cases. This resulted in 13 arrests, and 8 of those cases proceeded to trial. In 2014, 63 incidents reported to the police resulted in just two convictions. Many cases are not reported as a result of weak institutions, community pressure and fear of reprisals. In addition, the outlawed but still widely upheld requirement that victims obtain a "form 8" from the police in order to receive medical care deters reporting. Even when there is adequate evidence, the police do not consistently pursue formal prosecutions for rape, leaving communities to resort to traditional justice. For example, a 16-year-old displaced girl was raped by a police officer while gathering firewood on 13 May near Khamsa Dagaig camp. A complaint was filed, but the investigation was discontinued and the suspect released pursuant to a traditional settlement, which decreed that he should marry the victim. In an effort to extend the reach of the law, the Ministry of Justice appointed new prosecutors in all the states of Darfur in 2015 and deployed police to new areas in North Darfur. In February, the Criminal Act of 1991 was amended to include a definition of rape that is in line with international standards, and UNAMID and UNDP are supporting the establishment of a victim and witness protection programme.

Recommendation

67. I urge the Government to ensure timely, unhindered access for United Nations personnel to affected communities and to strengthen rule of law institutions. I reiterate my call for the Government to engage with my Special Representative to develop a framework of cooperation to address this long-standing concern.

Syrian Arab Republic

68. As the Syrian conflict enters its sixth year, sexual violence continues to be systematically used as a tactic of warfare, torture and terrorism. It has been most commonly reported in the context of house searches and hostage-taking, in detention and at checkpoints, by State and pro-Government forces, and in areas controlled by ISIL and other non-State groups. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported in September that women, men and children continued to be subjected to sexual violence by Government personnel at checkpoints and in detention (see A/HRC/30/48). The United Nations received accounts of the systematic sexual torture of men in detention centres, including rape with wooden sticks, and electric shocks to, and burning of, genitals. Such sexual torture was aimed at obtaining confessions of the men's involvement in alleged anti-Government activities. In some cases, female relatives were also arrested and forced to witness the torture.

69. ISIL continues to hold women and girls from the Iraqi Yezidi community and other minority groups in sexual slavery in the Syrian Arab Republic on the basis of their ethnic and religious identity. Women and girls from targeted minorities have been sold, traded, gifted to fighters, trafficked and held for ransom. ISIL has also forced Sunni women and girls into marriage with its fighters. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons have been targeted for physical and sexual assault on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, notably at checkpoints controlled by groups such as ISIL and the Nusrah Front, as well as in detention.

70. The majority of internally displaced persons are women and children, who face serious risks of sexual exploitation. Adolescent girls and women who are heads of household are particularly at risk. In interviews with female refugees in neighbouring Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, fear of rape is cited as a major factor inducing flight from the Syrian Arab Republic. Tragically, many refugees and asylum seekers face renewed risks of sexual violence, including forced prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes by criminal elements. Both inside the Syrian Arab Republic and in neighbouring countries, child marriage is often used as a negative coping strategy. In some contexts, displaced and refugee women lack residency and work permits in their own name and are therefore at risk of exploitation. Syrian women encounter serious challenges in attempting to register their children and face long-term social and security implications as a result.

Recommendation

71. I acknowledge the opportunity provided by the Government to my Special Representative to visit the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2015 and call upon the authorities, further to that visit, to agree upon specific measures to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence, including by members of the national security forces, and to immediately release women and children detained without charge. I call upon all parties to take measures to prevent sexual violence and to ensure the full participation of women in the peace process. I commend countries hosting Syrian refugees for their support to this vulnerable population and call upon them to adopt protection measures to mitigate the risk of sexual violence.

Yemen

72. The situation in Yemen continued to deteriorate in 2015: over 80 per cent of the population required humanitarian assistance; and women and children represented the vast majority of the 2.5 million internally displaced persons. More than 30 per cent of displaced households are headed by women, a notable increase from 9 per cent before the current crisis. A significant number of men nationwide have joined the fighting, leaving women and children in areas exposed to violence. There are few medical professionals trained to respond to sexual violence and no national guidelines on the clinical management of rape. In 2015, 5,866 cases of gender-based violence, including rape, sexual harassment and early marriage, were reported. OHCHR documented an incident in Sana'a during which a group of armed men forced a woman into a taxi for the purpose of sexual assault. She was later killed by her own family. The risk of "honour" crimes perpetuates the phenomenon of underreporting. During the battle to re-establish government authority in Aden, a number of men and boys were reportedly raped, although the perpetrators remain unknown. UNHCR estimates that there are 9,000 asylum seekers and 118,000 refugees in Yemen who lack social safety nets and face a high risk of sexual violence. The proliferation of ad hoc checkpoints in areas controlled by armed groups is also a risk factor for conflict-related sexual violence.

Recommendation

73. I call upon all stakeholders to take steps towards the inclusion of women in the political transition process and to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence crimes are investigated, the perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive services and reparations.

V. Addressing sexual violence crimes in post-conflict settings

Bosnia and Herzegovina

74. The social imprint of conflict-related sexual violence remains profound more than 20 years since the end of the war, with slow progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive support system for survivors. Most services are provided by civil society organizations, and the lack of official recognition and redress mechanisms further entrenches stigma. Insufficient support has been provided by the authorities for women who have children born as a result of wartime rape, although such women and children face socioeconomic marginalization. Displaced and returnee survivors of wartime rape require specific protection measures, as demonstrated by an incident in 2015 in which a survivor who testified publicly was targeted. Despite such incidents, the police does not adequately investigate allegations of threats against victims and witnesses. The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued the first-ever order for the payment of compensation in a judgment against perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence in 2015, which sets an important precedent. The Peace Support Operation Training Centre continues to provide predeployment training on conflict-related sexual violence for armed forces in the region.

Recommendation

75. I urge the authorities to uphold the rights of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to reparations, including in the form of compensation, services, economic empowerment, housing and education for children born as a result of rape, and to allocate a budget for this purpose.

Côte d'Ivoire

76. On 25 October, Côte d'Ivoire held its first presidential election since the crisis of 2010-2011, which had resulted in 3,000 deaths and the rape of more than 150 women. No recurrence of violence marred the 2015 elections, although some residual tensions and human rights concerns were raised. While an improvement in the security situation was seen during the reporting period, women and girls continue to suffer widespread sexual and gender-based violence linked with a climate of impunity, arms proliferation and an incomplete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) documented 176 cases of rape, including 18 gang rapes, with 39 of the incidents committed against women and 137 against minors. Of these cases, 73 alleged perpetrators were arrested, but only 23 were detained on the charge of indecent assault and referred for prosecution, resulting in terms of imprisonment ranging from 2 months to 10 years. In the remaining cases, suspects were either acquitted for lack of evidence or failed to attend court, or the victim withdrew the complaint for fear of retaliation. Most victims resort to traditional mechanisms to settle cases, given that the cost of a medical certificate ($100) is regarded as prohibitive. Despite the issuance of a waiver in 2014, in practice, medical certificates are still regarded as a prerequisite for investigation.

77. During 2015, a member of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), 2 policemen and 10 unidentified armed men were reportedly involved in incidents of rape. The FRCI soldier raped a 2-year-old girl and was arrested, initially for indecent assault, which the judicial authorities subsequently upgraded to rape. UNOCI was unable to pursue allegations of the rape of a woman in Abidjan by two police officers, due to the reticence of the gendarmerie hierarchy to share information. The other incidents, which included the rape of minors and the gang rape of a pregnant woman, occurred in the context of armed robbery by a criminal network allegedly comprising FRCI soldiers and former combatants.

78. While progress has been made to harmonize national laws with international standards, accountability remains a major challenge. None of the perpetrators of the 196 cases of sexual violence committed between October 2010 and May 2011 and documented in the report of the National Commission of Inquiry have been brought to justice. In March 2015, 43 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence committed by both parties during the electoral crisis filed a formal complaint before the Special Investigation Unit, but investigations remain at a nascent stage. While it is significant that reparations have been awarded for those killed or injured during the political crisis, it remains to be seen how survivors of conflict-related sexual violence will benefit from this programme. The adoption of a national strategy to combat gender-based violence signals political will; however, its implementation has been stalled by the absence of a budget commensurate with its aims. The FRCI committee of national experts continued to implement its action plan on addressing conflict-related sexual violence with the technical assistance of the Team of Experts

on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict and UNOCI. On 19 June 2015, 47 commanders signed a commitment to take action against sexual violence within their units, and the FRCI high command adopted a code of conduct on sexual violence for Ivorian soldiers.

Recommendation

79. I encourage the Government to fully implement the FRCI action plan to combat conflict-related sexual violence and the national strategy to combat gender-based violence by ensuring that perpetrators, including the military, police and former combatants, are held to account and survivors of sexual violence benefit from reparations, as part of the progress necessary to enable delisting from the annex to the present report.

Nepal

80. A decade after the end of the civil war, many Nepalese continue to suffer the enduring consequences of conflict-related sexual violence. Survivors face stigmatization, inadequate access to services, limited victim or witness protection and threats from their own community. The lack of official recognition of sexual violence survivors as conflict-affected persons limits their access to relief. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Nepal, established in February 2015, created a subcommittee for victims, children, senior citizens and persons with disabilities and women. One commissioner expressed support for private, women-only hearings for sexual violence survivors. In October 2015, the Act to Amend Laws to End Gender Violence and Ensure Gender Equality entered into force, broadening the definition of rape and extending the 35-day statute of limitations for the filing of a complaint to 180 days. However, until the statute of limitations is revoked, the legal framework will not assist victims from the civil war era.

Recommendation

81. I encourage the Government to recognize victims of conflict-related sexual violence as conflict-affected persons, to remove barriers that may prevent them from gaining access to justice and to accelerate the second phase of its national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

Sri Lanka

82. The 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka disproportionally affected women, who continue to face sexual abuse and threats. The results of an investigation by OHCHR that covered the period from 2002 to 2011 highlighted the extent of the sexual violence committed in detention by the security forces against both women and men (see A/HRC/30/CRP.2). These were not isolated incidents, but rather part of a policy. Nevertheless, accountability has been limited. The conviction of four soldiers in October by the High Court of Jaffna for the rape of two women in 2010 is the first of its kind. The report further states that women living in the militarized north continue to be vulnerable to sexual violence committed by members of the armed forces. In Tamil communities, lone women who head nearly 60,000 households describe an ever-present threat of sexual exploitation by the military. In 2015, the new Government adopted an act on the protection of witnesses

and victims and a set of recommendations on preventing sexual and gender-based violence.

Recommendation

83. I call upon the Government to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence is addressed in all transitional justice processes, that multisectoral services reach survivors and that economic empowerment programmes benefit women in militarized areas who are heads of households.

VI. Other situations of concern

Burundi

84. In the context of the recent political unrest in Burundi, a pattern of sexual violence was documented on 11 and 12 December, when three military camps in Bujumbura were attacked, generating reprisals by the security forces in opposition districts. In connection with these reprisals, at least 13 sexual assaults were documented, which were allegedly committed by members of the special police unit in charge of protecting public institutions, elements of the military police, soldiers and the Imbonerakure (armed youth and other civilians supporting the security forces). The modus operandi of these attacks involve security forces entering homes, forcing male residents to leave, taking women and girls aside and raping or gang raping them. Rape victims also reported insults based on their actual or perceived political or ethnic affiliation. In an illustrative incident, on 11 December, policemen from the special unit entered a house in Mutakura, ordered the father to leave and forced the three daughters to "undress", which is a euphemism used to refer to rape. The police returned on 14 December and again "undressed" the girls, after which the family fled the area. At least one rape survivor was detained after speaking to a journalist. Following the political crisis, UNHCR has documented 323 incidents of sexual violence, involving 264 women and 59 girls, which occurred either in Burundi or during flight. A number of women and girls attempting to flee were reportedly taken by the Imbonerakure to the Nyabisindu military camp, located in Marembo, and sexually assaulted.

Recommendation

85. I call for an investigation into reports of sexual violence, the prosecution of perpetrators; the immediate release of any women or girls detained in military camps and efforts by the authorities to ensure that survivors can safely access services and redress and that humanitarians can operate without impediment.

Nigeria

86. One year after Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno State, only 57 have returned. An estimated 2,000 women and girls have been abducted by Boko Haram since 2014, with many forced into sexual slavery (see S/2015/453). Such acts of sexual slavery, forced marriage and forced pregnancy could amount to war crimes and/or crimes against humanity (see A/HRC/30/67). At the internally displaced camp in Dalori, established in April 2015, more than 100 women have given birth following their escape from captivity (see ibid.). Several wished to terminate their pregnancies, although abortion remains illegal in Nigeria except

when the life or health of the woman is at stake. Owing to stigma and religious norms, most victims of sexual violence are reluctant to speak out and unwilling to return to their communities for fear they will be rejected as a source of "dishonour". As of June 2015, 307 women and children were enrolled in a government-run counselling, education and health-care programme. However, human rights concerns have been raised when women and children released from Boko Haram are held for prolonged periods by the security forces for screening and rehabilitation.

87. In camps and host communities, women and girls continue to face rape, forced marriage and "survival sex" to meet their families' needs. UNHCR identifies 676 households affected by sexual assault, with the highest proportion reported in Taraba, Adamawa and Borno States. Overcrowded camps, which afford limited privacy or socioeconomic opportunity, exacerbate this risk. A significant proportion of households in Adamawa, Borno and Gombe States reported cases of forced or early marriage. Progress was noted in late 2015 in the management of internally displaced persons camps, although psychosocial support and reproductive health care remain limited.

Recommendation

88. I reiterate my call for the immediate release of civilians abducted by Boko Haram and urge the authorities to assist women and girls who have survived captivity by supporting their social reintegration and providing all necessary health care and other comprehensive services, including the safe termination of pregnancies. I call for effective measures to prevent sexual violence in settings where women and girls seek refuge and to ensure that their safety and rights are considered in all counterinsurgency efforts.

VII. Recommendations

89. The information presented above underscores the need to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in order to address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence, transform harmful sociocultural norms and counter violent extremism. To this end, the following recommendations outline prevention and response measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels. In their implementation, I call for national leadership and responsibility, noting that the United Nations stands ready to support national authorities in their efforts.

90. **I urge the Security Council:**

(a) **To recognize that, in addition to being employed as a tactic of war, as noted in resolution 1820 (2008), sexual violence can constitute a tactic of terrorism, as noted in resolution 2242 (2015). Accordingly, efforts to prevent and address sexual violence should be strategically aligned with efforts to prevent violent extremism and terrorism;**

(b) **To fully integrate the issue of conflict-related sexual violence into the work of relevant sanctions committees, including the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and to ensure that dedicated gender and conflict-**

related sexual violence expertise consistently informs the work of sanctions committees;

(c) To continue to encourage and support engagement with State and non-State parties to conflict for specific commitments and prevention plans on conflict-related sexual violence, and to systematically monitor their compliance;

(d) To ensure that any national forces listed in the annexes to my reports on conflict-related sexual violence are not accepted as troop or police contributors to peacekeeping operations until they have taken specific measures in line with resolution 2106 (2013) and have been delisted;

(e) To continue to recognize and address the nexus between trafficking in persons and conflict-related sexual violence, including by violent extremist groups, and to pursue accountability and sanctions for individuals and entities involved in trafficking for the purposes of sexual violence;

(f) To employ the means at its disposal to influence both State and non-State parties to conflict to comply with international law, including by referring matters to the International Criminal Court. Referrals should apply to individuals who commit, command or condone by failing to prevent or punish, sexual violence, and should entail a structured relationship of cooperation, follow-up and support to the work of the Court;

(g) To give due consideration to the risk factors and early warning signs of sexual violence in its monitoring of conflict situations, especially in relation to periods of political instability, elections, civil strife and mass population movements, such as forced displacement, and to monitor the use of inflammatory rhetoric or media incitement to sexual and other forms of violence against women in situations of concern;

(h) To use its periodic field visits to focus attention on conflict-related sexual violence concerns, to solicit the views of affected communities, women's civil society organizations and associations of survivors, as appropriate, and to draw attention to the risks faced by minorities and marginalized groups.

91. I encourage Member States, donors and regional organizations:

(a) To ensure that survivors benefit from relief and recovery programmes, including health care, psychosocial care and socioeconomic reintegration and livelihood support. Services should include provision for women with children born as a result of wartime rape;

(b) To put in place legislative and institutional arrangements to address conflict-related sexual violence and prevent its recurrence, including specific victim and witness protection laws and programmes; timely and consistent sentences that serve as a deterrent; reparations for victims; safeguards to prevent individuals accused of violations from being retained and promoted within the security forces (vetting in the context of security sector reform); the exclusion of these crimes from general amnesties and statutes of limitations; education that fosters gender equality; and programmes to ensure that women, including those who become pregnant as a result of rape, have the information, support and services they need, including access to emergency contraception and measures for the safe termination of pregnancies. In these efforts,

particular attention should be paid to groups that face additional barriers to justice such as ethnic or religious minorities, women in rural or remote areas, those living with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and women and children associated with armed groups;

(c) To give due consideration to recognizing conflict-related sexual violence as a form of persecution that may serve as grounds for refugee status, in the light of its use as a tactic to induce displacement;

(d) To ensure that all refugee-receiving countries provide information on the services available to sexual violence survivors, ensure sustainable psychosocial support and provide survivors with the option to document their cases for future accountability processes;

(e) To support the training of journalists as part of a broader strategy to ensure that the media, including both traditional and new/social media, is not used for incitement to violence, and to foster safe and ethical reporting on sexual violence;

(f) To include in government protocols the specific and distinct needs of female and male victims of sexual violence, and train health-care providers on how to respond to survivors of any age or sex, noting that male and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex victims should be included within the scope of protection provided under national law;

(g) To improve conviction rates for crimes of sexual violence by integrating legal support options with medical and psychosocial care and improving the reach of these services in conflict-affected areas, as well as removing the barriers to reporting by providing free treatment and medical certificates and ending the practice of mandatory police reporting as a precondition to access to care;

(h) To continue to draw upon existing rosters of professionals trained in dealing with sexual and gender-based violence in order to ensure appropriate and timely documentation and investigation of these crimes;

(i) To ensure that gender capacity is included in ceasefire monitoring and verification arrangements and teams, noting that grave violations such as conflict-related sexual violence should be considered to be a breach of ceasefire;

(j) To call upon mediators to include gender and conflict-related sexual violence expertise as part of their mediation support teams;

(k) To integrate gender analysis and training into national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, including resocialization and reintegration initiatives to mitigate the threat of sexual and gender-based violence, and to ensure that psychosocial interventions reach ex-combatants, given the rise in domestic and other violence that follows demobilization in many settings;

(l) To ensure that regional bodies enhance cooperation in information and documentation, the training of security forces, extradition and legal assistance and enhancing public awareness to combat conflict-related sexual violence;

(m) To train all peacekeeping personnel on gender sensitivity, sexual exploitation and abuse prevention and addressing conflict-related sexual violence as a mandatory component of predeployment training, and to ensure that this consideration is integrated into the performance and operational readiness standards against which troops are assessed;

(n) To support the engagement of religious leaders, paying particular attention to amplifying the voices of women, with the objective of curbing violent extremism, preventing the justification of sexual or other violence on religious grounds and addressing the stigmatization suffered by survivors of sexual violence.

92. **I urge Member States to draw upon the expertise of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, to support them in building the capacity of civilian and military justice systems, as part of efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards against impunity. I urge donors to ensure sustainable funding for this valuable resource.**

93. **I urge Member States to support the efforts of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and its Multi-Partner Trust Fund, in particular for the development and implementation of comprehensive national strategies to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence.**

Annex

List of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council

The present annex does not purport to be a comprehensive list of perpetrators, but includes those for whom credible information is available. It should be noted that the names of countries appear only to indicate the locations in which parties are suspected of committing relevant violations.

Parties in the Central African Republic

1. Lord's Resistance Army.
2. Former Séléka coalition.
3. Anti-balaka forces, including associated elements of the armed forces of the Central African Republic.
4. Révolution et justice.
5. Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain.

Parties in Côte d'Ivoire

1. Ex-militia groups, including:
   (a) Alliance patriotique de l'ethnie Wé;
   (b) Front pour la libération du Grand Ouest;
   (c) Mouvement ivoirien de libération de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire;
   (d) Union patriotique de résistance du Grand Ouest.
2. Ivorian armed forces.*

Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. The following armed groups:
   (a) Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain;
   (b) Allied Democratic Forces — National Army for the Liberation of Uganda;
   (c) Forces pour la défense du Congo;
   (d) Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda;
   (e) Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri/"Colonel" Adirodhu Mbadhu/"Colonel" Kakado;
   (f) Lord's Resistance Army;
   (g) Mai Mai Cheka/Nduma Defence for Congo;

* Party has committed itself to adopting measures to address conflict-related sexual violence.

(h) Mai Mai Kifuafua;

(i) Mai Mai Simba Manu;

(j) Mai Mai Simba Mangaribi;

(k) Mai Mai Simba/Lumumba;

(l) Nyatura;

(m) Raia Mutomboki/Mulumbu Willy, also known as "Willy Alexandre";

(n) Raia Mutomboki/Sadiki Desaba, also known as "Kabazimya".

2. Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo.*

3. Congolese national police.

Parties in Iraq

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Parties in Mali

1. Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad.

2. Ansar Eddine.

3. Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'ouest.

4. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

5. Groupe d'autodéfense Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés.

Parties in Somalia

1. Al-Shabaab.

2. Somali national army.*

3. Somali national police force* and allied militia.

4. Puntland military.

Parties in the Sudan

1. Justice and Equality Movement.

2. Sudanese armed forces.

3. Rapid Support Forces.

Parties in South Sudan

1. Lord's Resistance Army.

2. Justice and Equality Movement.

3. Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition.*

4. Sudan People's Liberation Army.*

5. South Sudanese national police.*

Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

1. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.
2. Other armed groups in contested areas such as Raqqah, Hasakah, Damascus and Rif Dimashq, including:
   (a) Nusrah Front;
   (b) Army of Islam;
   (c) Aknaf Bayt al-Maqdis;
   (d) Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis;
   (e) Ahrar al-Sham.
3. Government forces, including the Syrian armed forces, intelligence services and pro-Government forces, including the National Defence Forces militia.

Other parties of concern on the agenda of the Security Council

Boko Haram.